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**NEWS RELEASE**

# Judd Gregg



United States Senator for New Hampshire

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **\$8 MILLION FOR FORMER IP LANDS INCLUDED IN FINAL FY03 FEDERAL SPENDING MEASURE**

*Measure represents final piece of federal funding for Conn. Lakes Headwaters Tract*

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) today announced that \$8 million for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Land is in the final version of the Fiscal Year 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Conference Report which was given final approval by Congress late last evening. The measure now heads to the White House to be signed into law by February 20 when the current continuing resolution expires. The \$8 million, which Senator Gregg was able to include in the Omnibus measure, represents the final portion of the federal share of an easement on the land.

During the joint House/Senate Conference Committee there was an effort by some House appropriators to reduce the funding for the project to \$6 million. However, as a member of the Conference Committee, Senator Gregg was able to restore the full \$8 million needed to complete the federal government's share of the project. Senator Gregg was able to secure \$3.6 million through last year's appropriations process as an initial payment on the land.

Senator Gregg stated, "The inclusion of the \$8 million in the Conference Report is great news for New Hampshire. This is the final and long-awaited piece of the puzzle representing the federal government's commitment to protecting this beautiful land for generations of Granite Staters. The members of the Conference Committee in charge of writing the final bill had to weigh difficult decisions regarding funding for the war on terror and other domestic priorities. I am pleased to have been in a position to convince the Committee that the full \$8 million for this land represents a critical investment in the economic and environmental well-being in New Hampshire."

"This is tremendous news for New Hampshire," said Daryl Burnett, director of The Nature Conservancy's New Hampshire Chapter, "Those of us who care about the conservation of New Hampshire's Northern Forest thank Senator Gregg for his leadership in moving forward the funding of this critically important project. Completion of this 146,000 acre Forest Legacy easement helps protect not only the working forest tract, but also helps ensure the health of the 25,000-acre natural area that it surrounds."

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David Houghton, Director of the Northern New England Field Office of the Trust for Public Land, stated, “Forest Legacy funding is absolutely critical in the effort to conserve this land as the backbone of northern New Hampshire’s culture and economy. Senator Gregg’s consistent support of this project has been essential, both in his role as Co-Chair of the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Partnership Task Force and as a member of the Interior Appropriations Committee.”

William S. Bartlett, Acting Executive Director of New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, stated, “This tremendous natural area is an unparalleled resource in our state and the preservation of such an environmental treasure is a great accomplishment that will be remembered for generations. Judd Gregg’s work to secure the necessary appropriations has made this purchase a reality.”

Following the announcement by the International Paper Company to sell the 171,500 acres of forest in July 2001, Senator Gregg worked with former Governor Shaheen, House Speaker Gene Chandler and then Senate President Arthur Klemm to assemble the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Partnership Task Force, a team of local, state and federal officials and private conservation organizations charged with developing a consensus approach, vision and funding mechanisms for protection of the IP lands. Senator Gregg co-chaired the Task Force, along with former Governor Shaheen, which issued a final report and recommendation in December 2001 for the protection of the IP lands, recreational public access for NH residents and visitors, the continuation of sustainable forestry, and the protection of ecologically sensitive resources. New Hampshire HB 1000, which was signed into law in May 2002, authorized \$10 million in state appropriations and directed the State of New Hampshire to acquire fee ownership and conservation easement interests on the land.

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